

The Future is Here and it is People Centered Management.

HR Review January 28, 2010 in [Uncategorized](#) | Tags: [becoming a manager](#), [future of management](#), [good management](#), [leadership development](#), [management development](#), [management practice](#), [people centred management](#), [person centred management](#)

Various pieces of research over the last decade reveal that in working Britain the manager is a much maligned and often reportedly incompetent individual. Bad managers are sited [as the main reason people leave their jobs](#), [found guilty of curbing the ambition of young talent](#), deemed as [being too slow to embrace new working practices](#) and altogether being too [poorly skilled](#) for the complexity of people management. So if you are at work and feeling very strong negative emotions about your manager, you are not alone.

There are a number of reasons why the manager becomes the locus of emotion at work. This one person can at the very least exert substantial influence over your working life, represent a figure of authority, allocate workload and lead. Oftentimes however, behind the face of the person who pushes all your buttons is someone who is also struggling, has little idea how to approach managing people, is unprepared for the demands of man management and who is terrified. I remember vividly coming across an article from The Harvard Business Review nearly ten years ago on becoming a manager and feeling relieved that my early experience was enormously hard and incredibly normal. The discovery that management was difficult made it easier for me to look for support in developing my management approach and helped me deal with those senior to me, whose approach may have differed from mine and from what I may have needed of that relationship.

Promotion to management posts in the UK tend to be based on functional competence and on the job success. In other words, you become good at something like sales or account ledgers, continue to be good and then get promoted to doing something that requires you to develop a different skill set and identity in order to succeed. It is not surprising that promotion to management can be seen as one rung down from winning employee of the month, which is, as a colleague of mine once put it, the surest way to win and lose at the same time. This is the point when you need support from your organisation. By receiving training, coaching and leadership you can work out your management persona and learn how to coach, manage and lead your team to collective success.

The basis of management training often relies on self knowledge and defining good management traits but the enactment of these does not happen independently of a collective. You can have good people at all levels of seniority who are all given little room to do the job or behave as they might want. Negative emotions begin to bubble under the surface and while all may remain constrained, the organisation becomes dysfunctional. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, a recent study published on [Executive Grapevine](#), reported that there is a disconnect between what great managers do and what they are expected to do.

The report identifies the main skill of outstanding managers and leaders as being people centered. This goes beyond people orientation to truly understanding that people are the key asset of any organisation and leading accordingly. From an academic point of view, this is not news. There has been ample research on the benefits of the people centric organisation for individuals and for the business. Once we cut past the rhetoric and behave as though we mean that people are the most valuable asset a company has, the results speak for themselves and managers can play the pivotal role that their role empowers them to play.

There are businesses that have embraced the idea of people centric management to the degree that they do not promote people into management based on functional competence. This has required more diverse career pathways and some novel approaches to man management and leadership. Professionals with people management skills are pooled and employees can swap manager if there is no fit. Sadly, but perhaps unsurprisingly, this [award winning approach](#) can terrify traditional practitioners, but there is some hope of change as the CIPD, Investors in People and other are making in roads into businesses lobbying to affect government policy.

Much was anticipated to change in business as a result of the recession, but the last 18 months have shown us that putting people first can work best for all. As we continue to strive towards a calmer economic future it is leading with people in mind that will drive up revenue, reduce recruitment and other costs and make the leaps forward in invention and productivity. Investing in getting the right kind of management team therefore is one of the wisest steps any business wanting to have a future can take